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The most bitter
fox of nations —

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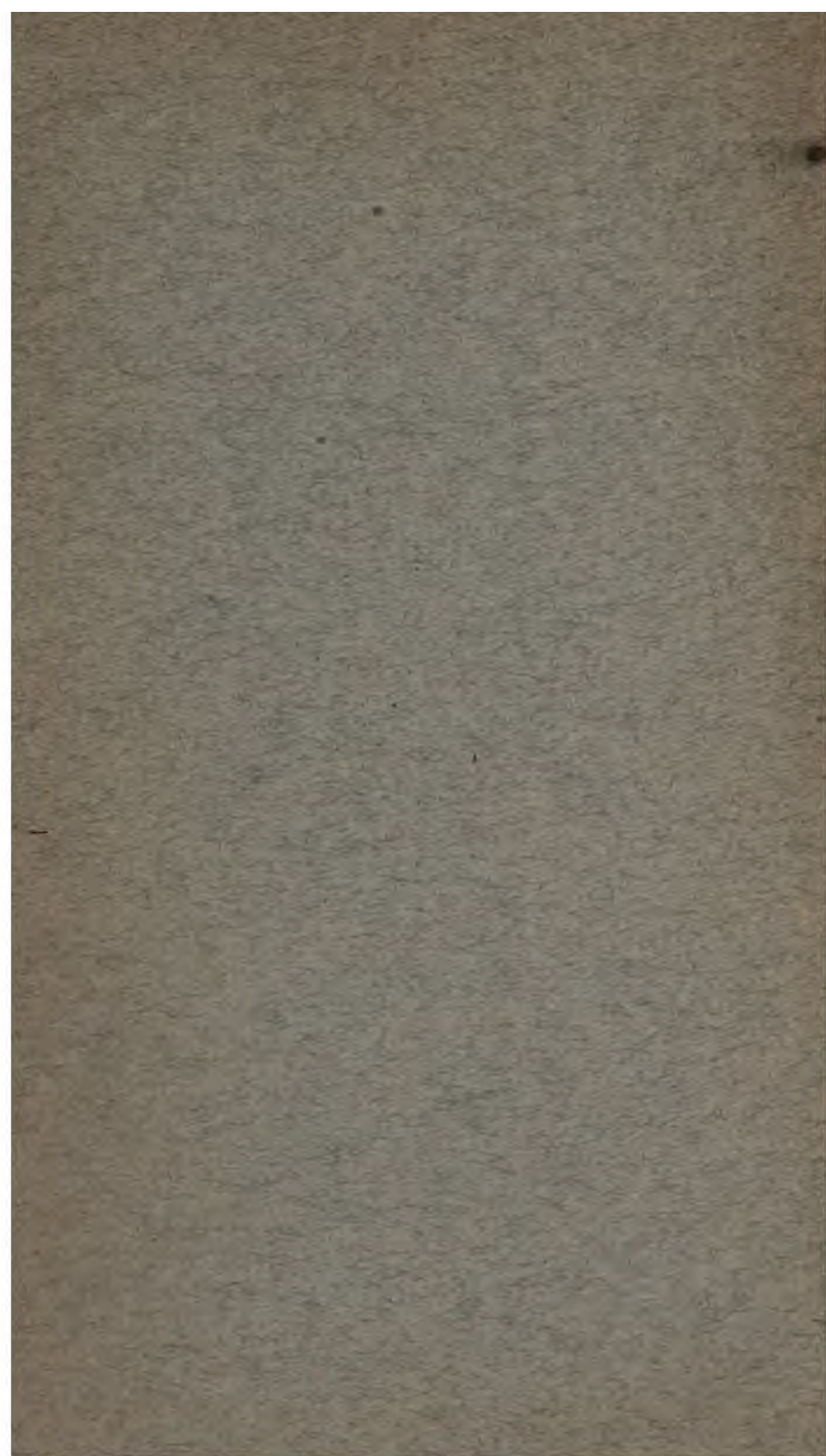
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University of Michigan

Presented by

E. J. Whitehead

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The most Bitter Foe of Nations, and the Way to its
Permanent Overthrow.

AN

193-00
From
E. J. Whitehead.

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY,

AT

YALE COLLEGE, JULY 25, 1866,

BY

ANDREW D. ^{Dickson} WHITE.

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NEW HAVEN, *July 26, 1866.*

DEAR SIR,

The undersigned have been appointed by the PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY a Committee to render you the cordial thanks of the Society for your admirable Address, delivered last evening, and to request a copy for the Press.

Respectfully and truly yours,

A. C. TWINING,

G. P. FISHER.

Professor WHITE.

STATE OF NEW YORK,

Senate Chamber,

Albany, Aug. 30th, 1866.

GENTLEMEN,

Accept my thanks for the very kind expressions regarding the Address which, in accordance with the request conveyed by you, I forward herewith.

With great respect,

Very truly yours,

A. D. WHITE.

Professors A. C. TWINING and
G. P. FISHER.

A D D R E S S.

IN this sacred struggle and battle of so many hundred years,—this weary struggle of truths to be recognized,—this desperate battle of rights to be allowed ;—in this long, broad current toward more truth and more right, in which are seen the hands of so many good and bad and indifferent men,—and in the midst of all, and surrounding all, the hand of very God,—what political institution has been most vigorous against this current,—what political system has been most noxious to political truth and right?—in short, what foe, in every land, have right and liberty found it hardest to fight or outwit?

Is it Ecclesiasticism?—is it Despotism?—is it Aristocracy?—is it Democracy?

The time allotted me this evening I shall devote to maintaining the following Thesis :

OF ALL SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS, THE MOST VIGOROUS IN BATTLING LIBERTY,—THE MOST NOXIOUS IN ADULTERATING RIGHT,—THE MOST CORROSIVE IN EATING OUT NATIONALITY, HAS BEEN AN ARISTOCRACY BASED UPON HABITS OR TRADITIONS OF OPPRESSION.

I shall also attempt to deduce from the proofs of this a corollary, showing *the only way in which such an Aristocracy ever has been or ever can be fought successfully and put down permanently.*

Let me first give this Thesis precision.

I do not say that Aristocracy, based upon habits and tra-

ditions of oppression, is the foe which takes deepest hold ;—Despotism and Ecclesiasticism are dragons which get their claws far deeper into the body politic ;—for Despotism clutches more temporal, and Ecclesiasticism more eternal interests.

Nor do I say that Aristocracy is the enemy most difficult to find and come at. Demoralization in Democracy is harder to find and come at ; for demoralization in Democracy is a disease, and lurks,—Aristocracy is a foe, and stands forth—bold ; Demoralization is latent, and political doctors disagree about it,—Aristocracy is patent, and men of average sense soon agree about it.

But the statement is that Aristocracy, based upon oppression, is, of all foes to liberty the most vigorous, of all foes to rights the most noxious, and of all foes to nationality the most corrosive.

Other battles may be longer ;—but the battle with Aristocracy is the sharpest which a nation can be called upon to wage,—and as a nation uses its strength during the contest—and *as it uses its wits after the contest*—so shall you find its whole national life a success or a failure.

For my proofs I shall not start with *a priori* reasoning :—that shall come in as it is needed in the examination of historical facts. You shall have the simple, accurate presentation of facts from history—and plain reasoning upon these facts—and from Ancient History, rich as it is in proofs, I will draw nothing !—all shall be drawn from the history of modern States—the history of men living under the influence of great religious and political ideas which are active to-day—and among ourselves.

Foremost among the examples of the normal working of an Aristocracy based upon the subjection of a class, I name SPAIN. I name her first—not as the most striking example, but as one of those in which the evil grew most naturally, and went through its various noxious phases most regularly.

The fabric of Spanish nationality had much strength and much beauty. The mixture of the Barbarian element with the Roman, after the Roman downfall, was probably happier there than in any other part of Europe. The Visigoths gave Spain

the best of all the barbaric codes. Guizot has shown how,* as by inspiration, some of the most advanced ideas of modern enlightened codes were incorporated into it.

The succeeding history of the Spanish nation was also, in its main sweep, fortunate. There were ages of endurance which toughened the growing nation,—battles for right which ennobled it;—disasters which compacted manliness and squeezed out effeminacy.

This character took shape in goodly institutions. The city growth helped the growth of liberty, not less in Spain than in her sister nations. Cities and towns became not merely centres of prosperity, but guardians of freedom.†

Then came, perhaps, the finest growth of free institutions in Mediæval Europe.

The Cortes of Castile was a representative body nearly a hundred years before Simon de Montfort laid the foundations of English parliamentary representation at Leicester.‡ The Commons of Arragon had gained yet greater privileges earlier.

Statesmen sat in these—statesmen who devised curbs for monarchs, and forced monarchs to wear them. The dispensing power was claimed at an early day by Spanish Kings as by Kings of England;—but Hallam acknowledges§ that the Spaniards made a better fight against this despotic claim than did the English. The Spanish established the Constitutional principle that the King cannot dispense with statutes centuries before the English established it by the final overthrow of the Stuarts.

Many sturdy maxims, generally accounted fruit of that early English boldness for liberty, are of that earlier Spanish period. “No taxation without representation” was a principle asserted in Castile early, often and to good purpose. In Arragon no war could be declared,—no peace made,—no money coined without consent of the Cortes.||

* History of Civilization in Europe. Third Lecture.

† Sempere, *Histoire des Cortes d'Espagne*, Chap. 6.

‡ Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isabella*. Introduction, p. 48.

§ Hallam's *Hist. of Middle Ages*, Vol. 2, p. 30.

|| Robertson's *Introduction to Life of Charles V.*, Section 3d; also Prescott.

The "Great Privilege of Saragossa" gave quite as many, and quite as important liberties to Arragon as were wrested from King John for England in the same century.

Such is a meagre sketch of the development of society at large. As regards the other development which goes to produce civilization—the development of individual character, the Spanish peninsula was not less distinguished. In its line of monarchs were Ferdinand III., Alfonso X., James II., and Isabella;—in its line of statesmen were Ximenes and Cisneros—worthy predecessors of that most daring of all modern statesmen, Alberoni. The nation rejoiced too in a noble line of poets and men of letters.*

Still more important than these brilliant exceptions was the tone of the people at large. They were tough and manly.†

No doubt there were grave national faults. Pride—national and individual—constantly endangered quiet. Blind submission to Ecclesiastical authority was also a fearful source of evil! Yet, despite these, it is impossible not to be convinced, on a careful reading of Spanish history, that the influence which tore apart States,—which undermined good institutions,—which defeated justice,—which disheartened effort,—which prevented resistance to encroachments of Ecclesiasticism and Despotism—nay, which made such encroachments a *necessity*—came from the *nobility*.

The Spanish nobility had risen and become strong in those long wars against the intruding Moors,—they had gained additional strength in the wars between provinces. They soon manifested necessary characteristics. They kept Castile in confusion by their dissensions,—they kept Arragon in confusion by their anti-governmental unions.

Accustomed to lord it over inferiors, they could brook no opposition,—hence all their influence was Anarchic; accustomed to no profitable labor of any sort, their influence was for

* What an effect this early liberty had in stimulating thought can be seen in a few moments by glancing over the pages of Ticknor's History of Spanish Literature.

† For some statements as to hardy characteristics of Spanish peasantry, see Doblado's Letters from Spain. Letter 2.

laziness and wastefulness;—accustomed to look on public matters as their monopoly, they devoted themselves to conjuring up phantoms of injuries and insults, and plotting to avenge them.

Every Aristocracy passes through one, and most Aristocracies through both of two historic phases.

The first may be called the *Vitriolic*,—the period of intense, biting, corrosive activity,—the period in which it gnaws fiercely into all institutions with which it comes into contact,—the period in which it decomposes all elements of nationality.

In Spain this first period was early developed and long continued. Grandees and nobles bit and cut their way into the Legislative system,—by brute force, too, they crushed their way through the Judicial system,—by judicious mixtures of cheating and bullying they often controlled the Executive system.

Chapter after chapter of Mariana's history begins with the story of their turbulence, and ends with the story of its sad results;—how the nobles seized King James of Arragon;—how the Lara family usurped the Government of Castile;—how the houses of Lara, Haro, Castro and their peers are constantly concocting some plot, or doing some act to overthrow all governmental stability.

But their warfare was not merely upon Government and upon each other;—it was upon the people at large. Out from their midst comes a constant voice of indignant petitions. These are not merely petitions from serfs. No! history written in stately style has given small place to their cries;—but the great flood of petitions and remonstrances comes from the substantial middle class, who saw this domineering upper class trampling out every germ of commercial and manufacturing prosperity.

Such was the current of Spanish history. I now single out certain aristocratic characteristics bedded in it which made its flow so turbulent.

Foremost of these was that first and most fatal characteristic of all aristocracies based on oppression—*the erection of a substitute for patriotism.*

Devotion to caste, in such circumstances, always eats out love of country. A nobility often fight for their country—often die for it;—but in any supreme national emergency,—at any moment of moments in national history the rule is that you are sure to find them asking—not “What is my duty to my country?” but “*What is my duty to my order?*”

Every crisis in Spanish history shows this characteristic,—take one example to show the strength of it.

Charles the Fifth was the most terrible of all monarchic foes to the old Spanish institutions. The nobles disliked him for this. They also disliked him still more as a foreigner. Most of all they disliked him because the tools he used in overturning Spain were foreigners.

Against this detested policy the cities of the kingdom planned a policy thoughtful and effectual. Cardinal Cisneros favored it,—the only thing needed was the conjunction of the nobles. They seemed favorable—but at the supreme moment they wavered. The interest of the country was clear;—but *how as to the interests of their order?* They began by fearing encroachments of the people;—they ended by becoming traitors, allowed the battle of Villalar to be lost—and with it the last chance of curbing their most terrible enemy.*

Another characteristic was *the development of a substitute for political morality.*

These nobles were brave. The chronicles gave them plentiful supply of chivalric maxims, and they carried these out into chivalric practices. Their quickness in throwing about them the robes of chivalry was only excelled by their quickness in throwing off the garb of ordinary political morality. They could die for an idea, yet we constantly see among them acts of bad faith—petty and large—only befitting savages.

John Alonzo de la Cerda, by the will of the late King, had been deprived of a certain office; he therefore betrays the stronghold of Myorga to the new King's enemies.† Don Alonzo de Lara had caused great distress by his turbulence. Queen Berengaria writes an account of it to the King. Don Alonzo

* Sempere, p. 205.

† Mariana Hist. of Spain.

does not scruple to waylay the messenger, murder him, and substitute for the true message a forgery, containing an order in the Queen's hand for the King's murder.* Of such warp and woof is the history of the Spanish aristocracy—the history of nobles whose boast was their chivalry.

How is this to be accounted for? Mainly by the fact, I think, that the pride engendered by lording it over a subject class lifts men above ordinary morality. If commonplace truth and vulgar good faith fetter that morbid will-power which self-owning gives, truth and good faith must be rent asunder.

The next characteristic was *the erection of a theory of easy treason and perpetual anarchy*.

Prescott calls this whimsical; he might more justly have called it frightful.

For this theory, which they asserted, maintained, and finally brought into the national notion and custom was, that in case they were aggrieved—*themselves being judges*—they could renounce their allegiance,—join the bitterest foes of king and nation,—plot and fight against their country,—deluge the land in blood,—deplete the treasury; and yet that the King should take care of the families they left behind, and in other ways make treason pastime.

Spanish history is black with the consequences of this theory. Mariana drops a casual expression in his history which shows the natural result, when he says: "The Castro family were *much in the habit* of revolting and going over to the Moors."†

The absurdity of this theory was only equaled by its iniquity.

For it involved three ideas absolutely fatal to any State—the *right of peaceable secession—the right of judging in their own cause, and the right of committing treason with impunity*. Now, any nation which does not, when stung by such a theory, throttle it, and stamp the life out of it, is doomed.

Spain did not grapple with it. She tampered with it, truckled to it, compromised with it.

* Mariana, History of Spain.

† Mariana, History of Spain, XIII. 11.

This nursed another characteristic in her nobility, which is sure to be developed always under like circumstances. This characteristic was *an aristocratic inability to appreciate concessions*.

The ordinary sort of poor statesmanship which afflicts this world generally meets the assumptions and treasons of a man-mastering caste by concessions. The commercial and manufacturing classes love peace and applaud concessions. But concessions only make matters worse. Concessions to a caste, based upon traditions of oppression, are but fuel to fire. The more privileges are given, the higher blazes its pride, and pride is one of the greatest causes of its noxious activity. Concessions to such a caste are sure to be received as tributes to its superiority. Such concessions are regarded by it not as favors but as rights, and no man ever owed gratitude for a right.

There remained then but one way of dealing with it,—that was by overwhelming force; and at the end of the Fifteenth Century that force appeared. The encroachments upon regular central government produced the same results in Spain as in the rest of Europe at about the same time.

To one not acquainted with previous history, but looking thoughtfully at the fifteenth century, it must seem strange that just at that time—as by a simultaneous and spontaneous movement—almost every nation in Europe consolidated power in the hands of a monarch. In France, in England, in Italy, as well as in Spain, you see institutions, liberties, franchises, boundaries sacrificed freely to establish despotism. You see Henry VII. in England, Louis XI. in France, Charles V., a little later, in Germany and Italy, Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain—almost all utterly unlovely and unloved—allowed to build up despotisms in all cases severe, and in most cases cruel. Why? Because the serf-owning caste had become utterly unbearable; because one tyrant is better than a thousand.

Then the Spanish nobility went into the next phase. Ferdinand, Charles the Fifth, Philip the Second—three of the harshest tyrants known to history,—having crushed out the boldness and enterprise of the aristocracy it passed from what

I have called the *Vitriolic* into what might be called the *Narcotic period*.

A period this was in which the noble became an agent in stimulating all evil tendencies in the monarch, and in stupefying all good tendencies in the people.

The caste spirit was a drug infused into the body politic, rendering inert all its powers for good. Did Charles the Fifth insult and depose Ximenes,—the nation sleepily permitted it; did Philip the Second lay bigot plans which brought the kingdom to ruin,—the nation lazily fawned upon him for it;* did Philip III. and his successors allow the nation to sink into contempt,—there was no voice to raise it.

Do you say that this resulted from Ecclesiasticism? I answer that the main reason why Ecclesiasticism became so strong was because it sheltered the lower class from the exactions of the Aristocracy. Do you say that it resulted from Despotism? I answer that Despotism became absolute in order to save the nation from the turbulence of the Aristocracy.†

No single Despotism, either in Church or State, could by itself have broken that well-knit system of old Spanish liberties. It was the growth of an oppressive caste, who by their spirit of disunion made Despotism possible, and by their spirit of turbulence made it necessary.

The next nation in which I would show the working of a caste with traditions of oppression is ITALY.

Man-owners had cost Italy dear already. Roman serf-culture had withered all prosperity in the country; slave service had eaten out all manliness from the city.

It is one of the most pregnant facts in history, and one which, so far as I know, has never been noted, that whereas the mul-

* "There probably never lived a prince who, during so long a period, was adored by his subjects as Philip II. was." Buckle, Vol. II., page 21. This explains the popularity of Henry VIII. of England better than all Froude's volumes, able as they are.

† All this examination into Aristocratic agency in Spanish decline is left out of Buckle's Summary. He passes at once to Ecclesiasticism and Despotism; but the unprejudiced reader will, I think, see that this statement is supplementary to that. In no other way can any man explain the fatuity of the Spaniards in throwing away these old liberties.

titude who have written upon the subject have assigned innumerable causes for the decline and downfall of the Roman nation, *not one of any note has failed to name, as a cause, Roman slavery.* As to other causes they disagree—on this alone all agree.

The philosophers Montesquieu* and Gibbon,† the economist Sismondi,‡ the *doctrinaire* Guizot,§ the republican Michelet,|| the eclectic Schlosser,¶ high tory Alison,** moderate Merivale,†† democrat Bancroft,‡‡ *quasi* conservative, *quasi* liberal Charles Kingsley,§§ wide apart as the poles on all else, agree to name as a cause of Roman ruin the system of forced labor.

But after the Roman downfall the struggle of Italy with her upper caste seems singularly fortunate. At an early day her cities by commerce became rich and strong. Then in the natural course of things—first, free ideas, next, free institutions, next, war upon the nobles to make them respect these ideas and institutions.

The war of municipalities against nobles was successful. Elsewhere in Europe cities sheltered themselves behind lords; in Italy lords sheltered themselves in cities. Elsewhere the lord dwelt in the castle *above* the city; in Italy the lord was forced to dwell in his palace *within* the city.¶¶

The victory of freedom seemed complete. The Italian republics were triumphant; the nobility were, to all appearance, subdued.

But those republics made a fearful mistake. They had a

* *Grandeur et Décadence des Romains*; English translation of 1784; pp. 109–10. Compare also *L'Esprit des Lois*, liv. xiv., chap. 1.

† Decline and Fall of Roman Empire, chap. 2.

‡ Fall of Roman Empire, last part of chap. 1.

§ *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, 2me Leçon.

|| History of Roman Republic, Book III., chap. 1.

¶ Schlosser, *Weltgeschichte für das Deutsche Volk*; vol. iv., xiv., 1.

** Essay on the Fall of Rome; Essays, vol. iii., p. 445.

†† History of the Romans, vol. vii., pp. 480–81.

‡‡ Bancroft's Miscellanies.

§§ The Roman and the Teuton—Lectures delivered before the University of Cambridge, p. 20.

¶¶ Guizot, *Civilisation en Europe*, 10me Leçon; also Trollope's History of Florence, vol. i., chap. 2.

great chance to destroy caste and lost it. They allowed the old caste spirit to remain, and that evil leaven soon renewed its work. The republics showed generalship in war, but in peace they were outwitted.

First, the nobles insisted on pretended rights within the city, and stirred perpetual civil war to make these rights good.*

Beaten at this they had yet a worse influence. Those great free cities would not indeed allow the nobles to indulge in private wars, but gradually the cities caught the infection from the nobles. The cities caught their aristocratic spirit of jealousy,—took nobles as leaders,—ran into their modes of plotting and fighting, and what I have called the *Vitriolic* period set in.

Undoubtedly some of this propensity came from other causes, but the main cause was this domineering aristocracy in its midst, giving tone to its ideas. Free cities in other parts of Europe disliked each other,—a few fought each other,—but none with a tithe of the insane hate and rage shown by the city republics of Italy.†

Hence arose that political product sure to rise in every nation where an aristocracy shape policy, the *Spirit of Disunion*. Its curse has been upon Italy for five hundred years. Dante felt it when he sketched the torments of Riniero of Corneto and Riniero Pazzo,‡ and the woes brought on Florence by the feuds of the Neri and Bianchi.§ Sismondi felt it when his thoughts of Italian disunion wrung from his liberty-loving heart a longing for Despotism.|| All Italy felt it when Genoa, in these last years, solemnly restored to Pisa the trophies gained in those old civil wars, and hung them up in the Campo Santo behind the bust of Cavour.

No other adequate reason for the chronic spirit of disunion

* Trollope's History of Florence, as above.

† Any historical student can easily satisfy himself of the truth of this statement by comparing the cases given by Barante in his *Hist. des Ducs de Bourgogne* with those given by Sismondi in the *Hist. des Républiques Italiennes*.

‡ *Inferno*; canto xii., 138.

§ *Ibid*; canto vi., 60.

|| *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, vol. x.

in Italy than the oppressive aristocratic spirit can be given. Italy was blest with every influence for unity ;—a most favorable position and conformation, boundaries sharply defined on three sides by seas and on the remaining side by lofty mountains, a great devotion to trade, a single great political tradition, a single great religious tradition, both drawing the nation toward one great central city.

Had Italy been left to herself without the disturbing influence of this chivalric, uneasy, plotting, fighting caste, who can doubt that petty rivalries would have been extinguished and all elements fused into a great, strong Nationality?

Turn from this history and construct such a society with your own reason. You shall find it all very simple. Put into energetic free cities or states a body of men accustomed to lord it over an inferior caste, whose main occupation is to brood over wrongs and to hatch revenges, and you ensure disunion between that state and sister states speedily. To such men every movement of a sister state is cause for suspicion, every betterment cause for quarrel.

But you ensure more than that. Under such circumstances *disunion is always followed by disintegration*. They are two inevitable stages of one disease. In the first stage the idea of country is lost ; in the second, the idea of government is lost ; disintegration is closely followed by Anarchy, and Despotism has generally been the only remedy.

To Italy in this strait despotism was the remedy. Disunion between *all* Italian Republics was followed by disintegration between factions in *each* Italian Republic. A multitude of city tyrants rose to remedy disintegration,—a single tyrant rose above all to remedy disunion.

These were welcomed because they at least mitigated anarchy. If a Visconti or a Sforza was bad at Milan, he was better than a multitude of tyrants. If the Scala were severe at Verona, they were less severe than the crowd of competitors whom they put down. If Rienzi was harsh at Rome, he was milder than the struggles of the Colonna and Orsini,—if the Duke of Athens was at once contemptible and terrible at

Athens, he was neither so contemptible nor so terrible as the feuds of the Cerchi and Donati.

And when, at last, Charles the Fifth crushed all these seething politics into a compact despotism, that was better than disunion, disintegration and anarchy.

This compression of anarchic elements ended the Vitriolic period of Italian Aristocracy, but it brought on the Narcotic period. It was the most fearful reign of cruelty, debauchery and treachery between the orgies of Vitellius and De Sade.

Yet those debaucheries and murders among the Borgias and later Medici, and so many other leading families, were but types of what this second phase of an oppressive aristocracy *must* be.

For the domineering caste-spirit immediately on its repression breaks out in cruelty. This is historical, and a moment's thought will show you that it is logical. The development of the chivalric noble into the cruel schemer is very easily traced.

Given such a lordling forced to keep the peace, and you have a character which, if it resigns itself, sinks into debauchery—which, if it resists, flies into plotting. Now both the debauchee and the plotter regard bodies and souls of inferiors as mere counters in their games,—hence they *must* be cruel.*

I turn now to another nation where the serf-mastering spirit wrought out its fearful work in yet a different manner, and on a more gigantic scale,—in a manner so brilliant that it has dazzled the world for centuries, and blazoned its faults as virtues;—on a scale so great that it has sunk art, science, literature, education, commerce and manufactures,—brought misery upon its lower caste,—brought death upon its upper caste,—and has utterly removed its nation from modern geography, and its name from modern history. I point you to POLAND.

Look at Polish history as painted by its admirers,—it is noble and beautiful. You see political scenes, military scenes, and individual lives which at once win you.

* For the working out of this principle by French and English nobilities into cruelties more frightful and inexcusable than any known to the Inquisition, see Orderic Vital Liv. XII. and XIII., also Barante's *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne*.

Go back three centuries,—stand on those old towers of Warsaw,—look forth over the Plains of Volo. The nation is gathered there. Its King it elects. The King thus elected is limited in power so that his main function is to do justice. The whole voting body are *equals*. Each, too, is *free*. No King, no Noble, is allowed to trench upon his freedom. So free is each that no will of the majority is binding upon him, except by his own consent. Here is equality indeed! Equality pushed so far that each man is not only the equal of every other—but of all others together;—the equal of the combined nation.

These men are brave, hardy, and, as you have seen, free, equal, and allowed more rights than the citizens of any republic before or since.*

But leave now this magnificent body—stretching over those vast plains beyond eye-reach. Tear yourselves away from the brave show—the flash of jeweled sabres and crosiers—the glitter of gilded trappings—the curvetings of noble horses between tents of silk and banners of gold-thread. Go out into the country from which these splendid freemen come.

Here is indeed a revelation! Here is a body of men whom history has forgotten. Strangely indeed—for it is a body far larger than that assembled upon the plains of Volo. *There* were, perhaps, a hundred thousand; *here* are millions. These millions are Christians, but they are wretchedly clad and bent with labor. They are indeed stupid,—unkempt,—degraded,—often knavish,—but they love their country,—toil for her,—suffer for her.

To them, in times of national struggles, all the weariness,—to them, in times of national triumphs, none of the honor.

These are the *serfs* of those brilliant beings prancing and caracoling and flashing on yonder plain of Volo—to the applauding universe.

* For examples of the brilliant side of Polish history presented, and dark side forgotten, see Chodzko *La Pologne Historique Monumentale et Pittoresque*. For fair summaries, see Alison's Essay, and his chapter on Poland, in the History of Europe—the best chapter in the book. The main authorities I have followed are Rulhière and Salvandy.

Evidently then, there has been a mistake here. History and poetry have forgotten to mention a fact supremely important.

The *people* of Poland are, after all, *not* free—*not* equal. The voting is not voting by the *people*. Freedom and the suffrage are for *serf-owners*,—equality is between *them*.

No one can deny that in this governing class were many, very many noble specimens of manhood—yielding ease and life for ideas—readily.

Emperor Henry the Fifth of Germany had tried in vain to overcome them by war. When the Polish ambassador came into his presence, the Emperor pointed to his weapon, and said, "I could not overcome your nobility with *these*;"—then pointing to an open chest filled with gold, he said, "but I will conquer them with *this*." The ambassador wore the chains and jewels befitting his rank. Straitway he takes off every ornament, and flings all into the Emperor's chest together.

Yet myriads of such men could not have averted ruin. Polish history proved it day by day.

It was not that these nobles were especially barbarous,—it was not that they were effeminate. *It was simply that they maintained one caste above another—allowing a distinction in civil and political rights.* The system gave its usual luxuriant fruitage of curses.

First in the *material* condition. Labor and trade were despised. If, in the useful class, a genius arose, the first exercise of his genius was to get himself out of the useful class. Labor was left to serfs; trade was left to Jews. Cities were contemptible in all that does a city honor. Villages were huddles. The idea thus implanted remains. Of all countries, called civilized, Poland seems to-day, materially, the most hopeless.*

It may be said that this results from Russian invasions;—but it was so *before* Russian invasions. It may be said that it results from Russian oppression,—but the great central districts of Russia are just as much under the Czar, and they are thriving. It may be said that Poland has been wasted by war;—but Belgium and Holland and the Rhine Palatinate

* This statement is based upon my own observations in Poland in the years 1855-6.

have been far more severely wasted, yet their towns are hives, and their country districts gardens.

Next, as to the *Political* condition.

A man-mastering caste necessarily develops the individual will morbidly and intensely. The most immediate of political consequences is, of course, a clash between the individual will and the general will.

Trouble then breaks forth in different forms in different countries. In Spain we saw it take shape in *Secession*;—in Italy we saw it lead to fearful territorial *Disunion*;—in Poland it first took the form of *Nullification*.

The nullifying spirit naturally crystallized into an institution. That institution was the *Liberum Veto*.

By this, in any national assemblage—no matter how great, no matter how important,—the veto of a single noble could stop all proceedings. Every special interest of every petty district or man had power of life and death over the general interest. The whim, or crotchet, or spite of a single man could and did nullify measures vital to the whole nation. In 1652, Siziniski, a noble sitting in the national diet, when great measures were supposed to be unanimously determined upon, left his seat, signifying his dissent. The whole vast machinery was stopped, and Poland made miserable.*

Closely allied to this was another political consequence.

Constant, healthful watchfulness over rights is necessary in any republic; but there is a watchfulness which is not healthful; it is the morbid watchfulness—the jealousy which arises in the minds of a superior caste, *living generally in contact with inferiors, and only occasionally in contact with equals*.

The Polish citizen lived on his estate. About him were inferiors,—beings who were not citizens—depending on him—doing him homage. But when the same citizen entered that Assembly on the Plains of Volo all this was changed. There he met his equals. Pride then clashed with pride,—faction rose against faction.

The result I will not state in my own words, for fear it may

* Rulhiere, *Anarchie de Pologne*. Vol. I., page 47.

be thought I warp facts to make a historical parallel. I shall translate word for word from Salvandy :

" *Confederations* were now formed—armed leagues of a number of nobles who chose for themselves a Marshal or President, and opposed decrees to decrees, force to force ; contending diets which raised leader against leader, and had the King sometimes as chief, sometimes as captive ; an institution deplorable and insensate, which opened to all discontented men a legal way to set their country on fire."*

From the political causes I have named logically flowed another.

In that perpetual anarchy, some factions must be beaten. But a class with traditions and habits of oppression is very different, when beaten, from a society swayed by manufacturing, commercial, and legal interests. These last try to make some arrangement. They yield, and fit matters to the new conditions. They are anxious to get back to their work again. But a class with habits of domineering has its own peculiar pride to deal with. It has leisure to brood over defeat, to whine over lost advantages, to fret over lost consideration, and you generally find it soon plotting more insidiously than before.

So it was with Poland. The beaten factions did what fighting aristocracies always do when fearful of defeat, or embittered by it,—the vilest thing they can do, and the most dangerous—*they intrigued for foreign intervention.*

Of all things, this is most fatal to nationality. Going openly over to the enemy is bad ; but intrigues with foreign powers, hostile by interest and tradition, are unutterably vile.

Yet there is not a nation where a class pursuing separate and distinct rights is tolerated, where such intrigues have not been frequent. More than this, such intrigues have generally been timed with diabolic sagacity.

The time chosen is generally some national emergency—when the nation is writhing in domestic misfortunes, or battling desperately against foreign foes. The Spanish nobles chose their time for intriguing with the Moors for their inter-

* Salvandy, *Vie de Jean Sobieski*. Vol. I., page 115.

vention, when the Spanish nation were in the most desperate struggle—not merely for temporal power, but even for the existence of their religion.

In France, the nobles chose such periods as those when Richelieu was leading the nation against all Europe and a large part of France. In Poland, the nobles chose the times when the nation was struggling against absolute annihilation.*

History, to one not blinded by Polish bravery, is clear here. The real authors of the partition of Poland were not Frederick of Prussia, and Maria Theresa of Austria, and Catherine of Prussia, but those proud nobles who drew surrounding nations to intervene in Polish politics.

The *Social* condition was also affected naturally. Poland went into the inevitable narcotic phase. Her court during the reigns of its later Kings was a brothel, and her nobles its worthy tenants.

What followed was natural. When the light of the last century streamed in upon this corrupt mass, Zamoiski and men like him tried to purify it,—to enfranchise the subordinate caste,—to work reforms. The Polish Republic refused. Then Providence began a work radical and terrible.

It is sad to see those brave citizen-nobles crushed beneath brute force of Russians, and Austrians, and Prussians. But it was well. One Alexander the First *would have* done, one Alexander the Second *has* done more good for Poland than ages of citizen serf-masters flourishing on the Plains of Volo.

The next nation to which I direct you is FRANCE.

Of all modern aristocracies, hers has probably been the most hated.† Guizot, in some respects its apologist, confesses this. Eugenie de Guérin—the most angelic soul revealed to this age—herself of noble descent—declares that the sight even of a ruined chateau made her shudder.‡ But all that history, rich

* The effects of Polish anarchy at home and intrigue abroad are pictured fully in a few simple touches in the "*Journal du Voyage de Boyard Chérémétiéff*." (*Bibliothèque Russe et Polonaise*.) Vol. IV., page 13.

† To understand the causes of this deep hatred, see Monteil, *Histoire des Français des divers Etats*, *Epître* 22.

‡ St. Beuve, *Causeries de Lundi*. Also Matthew Arnold's *Essays*.

as it is in illustrations of the noxious qualities of an oppressive aristocracy, I will pass, save as it presents the *dealing of statesmen with it*, their attempts to thwart it and crush it.

A succession of monarchs and statesmen kept up these attempts during centuries. Philip Augustus, Louis VI. and Louis VII., Suger, St. Louis, Philip the Long, all wrought well at this.

The great thing to notice in that mediaeval French statesmanship is that *they attacked the domineering caste in the right way*. Every victory over it was followed not merely by setting serfs free, but by giving them civil rights, and, to some extent, political rights. When one of the Kings I have named gave a Charter of Community, he did not merely make the serf a nominal freedman; he also gave him rights, and thus wrought him into a bulwark between the central power and the rage of the former master.*

So far all was good. The great difficulty was that none of those monarchs or statesmen obtained physical power enough to enforce this policy throughout France. It was mainly confined to towns.

But in the middle of the Fifteenth Century came the most persistent man of all—Louis the Eleventh. He gained power throughout the kingdom. If a noble became turbulent, he hunted him; if this failed, he entrapped him. Cages, dungeons, racks, gibbets, he used in extinguishing this sort of political vermin; and he used them freely and beneficially.

His policy seems cruel. Our weak women of both sexes, with whom the tears of a murderer's mistress outweigh the sufferings of a crime-ridden community, will think so. It was really merciful. Louis was, probably, a scoundrel; but he was not a fool, and he saw that the greatest cruelty he could commit would be to make concessions and try to *win over* the nobility. His hard, sharp sense showed him—that all history shows—that an oppressive caste can be crushed, but that wheedled and persuaded it cannot be.

* Guizot, *Civilisation en France*, 19me Leçon; also Hüllman's *Staetwesen des Mittelalters*. Vol. III., Chapter 1.

But Louis forgot one thing, and that the most important. Merely to *defeat* an aristocracy was not enough. *He forgot to provide guarantees for the lower classes*—he forgot to put rights into their hands which should enable them forever to check and balance the upper class when his hand was removed. You see that this mistake is just the reverse of that committed by previous statesmen.

Of course then, after the death of Louis, France relapsed into her old anarchy. Occasionally a strong King or city put a curb upon the nobles; but, in the main, it was the old bad history with variations ever more and more painful.

Over a hundred years more of this sort went by, and the rule of the nobles became utterly unbearable. The death of Henry the Fourth, in 1610, left on the throne a weak child as King, and behind the throne a weak woman as Regent. The nobles wrought out their will completely. They seized fortifications, plundered towns, emptied the treasury, domineered over the monarch, and impoverished the people. Curiously enough, too, to one who has not seen the same fact over and over in history, the nobles, during all these outrages of theirs, were declaiming, and groaning, and whining over their grievances and want of rights.*

Compromise after compromise was made, and to no purpose. No sooner were compromises made than they were broken. Finally, a great statesman, recognizing the futility of compromises, gave the aristocracy battle. This statesman was Richelieu.

The nobles tried all their modes of working I have shown in other countries. They tried nullification, secession, disunion. They intrigued for the intervention of Spain. They preferred caste to country, and attempted to desert France at the moment of her sorest need—at the siege of La Rochelle.

But Richelieu was too strong for them. His victories were magnificent. While he lived France had peace.†

* For these preposterous complaints and claims see the *Cahiers de doléances* quoted in Sir James Stephens' Lectures.

† Some details of Richelieu's grapple with the aristocracy I have given in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. ix., page 611.

Yet he makes the same mistake which Louis XI. had made. He defeats the upper caste ; but he guarantees no rights to the lower caste ; therefore he gives France no barrier against that old flood of evils—save his own hand, and when death removes that, chaos comes again.

Mazarin now grapples with them. They give him a fearful trial. They throw France into civil war. They pretend zeal for liberty, and form an anarchic alliance with the poor old stupid Parliament of Paris. They make Mazarin miserable. They throw filth upon him, then light him up with their fireworks of wit, and set the world laughing at him. Then they drive him out of France ; but he is keen and strong, and finally throws his nets over them, and France has another breathing time.

But the nobility if quiet are not a whit more beneficial—they are virulent and cynical as ever. Mazarin commits the same fault which Louis XI. and Richelieu had committed before him.

His mind was keen always, bold sometimes—yet never keen enough to see, or bold enough to try the policy of giving France a guarantee of perpetual peace, by raising up that lower class, and giving them rights, civil and political, which should attach them to the legitimate government, and make them a balancing body against the aristocracy.

It is wonderful ! Great men, fighting single-handed against thousands, clear in foresight and insight, quick in planning, vigorous in executing, finding every path to advantage, hurling every weighty missile, seeing everything, daring everything, except that one simple, broad principle in statesmanship which could have saved France from anarchy then and from revolution afterwards.

Gentlemen, it is a great lesson and a plain one. Diplomacy based on knowledge of the ordinary motives of ordinary men is strong,—statesmanship based on close study of the interests and aims of states and classes is strong ;—but there is a Diplomacy and a Statesmanship infinitely stronger. Infinitely stronger are the Diplomacy and Statesmanship whose master is a *heart*,—a heart with an instinct for truth and right ;—a heart

with a faith that on truth and right alone can peace be fitly builded.

Your common-place Cavour, with his deep instinct for Italian Liberty and Unity ;—your uncouth Lincoln, with his deep instinct for American Liberty and Unity, are worth legions of compromise builders and conciliation mongers.

Mazarin delivered France into the hands of Louis XIV., and Louis brought them permanently into the narcotic phase. He stupefied them with sensuality,—attached them to his court,—made his palace the centre of their ambition,—gave scope to their fancy, by setting them at powdering and painting and frizzing,—gave scope to their activity by keeping them at gambling and debauchery,—weaned them from turbulence by stimulating them to decorate their bodies and to debase their souls.*

The central power was thus saved ;—the people went on suffering as before.

Under the Regency of Louis XV. the nobility went from bad to worse. Their scorn for labor made them despise not merely those who toiled in Agriculture and Manufactures—it led them logically to openly neglect, and secretly despise professions generally thought the most honorable. When Racine ridiculed lawyers,† and when Moliere ridiculed physicians ‡ and scholars,§ they but yielded to this current.

Wise men saw the danger. Laws were passed declaring that commerce should not be derogatory to nobility. Abbé Coyer wrote a book to entice nobles into commerce. It had a captivating frontispiece, representing a nobleman elegantly dressed going on board a handsome merchant ship.|| All in vain. The serf-mastering traditions were too strong.

* For samples of the *mental* calibre of French nobility under this regime, see case of Baron de Breteuil, who believed that Moses wrote the Lord's Prayer. Bayle St. John's translation of St. Simon, Vol. I., p. 179. For sample of their *moral* debasement, see case of M. de Vendome. *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 187.

† In *Les Plaidours*.

‡ In *Le Médecin Malgré lui*, and other plays.

§ In *Le Mariage Forcé*.

|| *La Noblesse Commercante*. London, 1756.

The Revolution comes. The nobles stand out against the entreaties of Louis XVI.—the statesmanship of Turgot, the financial skill of Necker,—the keenness of Sieyès,—the boldness of Mirabeau. The very existence of France is threatened; but they have erected, as nobles always do, their substitute for patriotism. They stand by their order. Royalty yields to the third estate,—the clergy yield,—the nobility will not.

They are at last scared into momentary submission to right and justice and the spirit of the age. On the memorable Fourth of August they renounce their most hideous oppressions.

There is no end of patriotic speeches by these converts to liberty. The burden of all is the same. They are anxious to give up their oppressions. It is of no use to struggle longer, they are beaten, they will yield to save France.* Artists illustrate the great event, some pathetically, some comically.† The millennium seems arrived, a *Te Deum* is appointed. Yet plain common sense Buchez notes one thing in all this not so pleasant. In these “transports and outpourings,” (*transports et l'effusion de sentiments genereux*), one very important thing has been forgotten. *The nobles forget to give, and the people forget to take—guarantees.*‡

Woe to the people who trust merely the word of an upper caste habituated to oppression! Woe to the statesmen who do not at once crystallize such promises into constitutional and legislative acts!

These nobles shortly regretted their concessions and sought to evade them.§ The aristocrats whom they represented soon denied the right of their deputies to make these concessions, and soon after repudiated them.||

How could it be otherwise? When you speak of concessions

* For general account, see *Mignet, or Louis Blanc, or Thiers*. For speeches in detail, see *Buchez et Roux, Histoire Parlementaire*, Vol. II., pp. 224-243.

† *Challamel Histoire-Musée de la République Française*, Vol. I., pp. 72-75, where some of these illustrations can be found.

‡ *Buchez and Roux*, Vol. II., p. 231.

§ *Mignet*, Vol. I.

|| *Histoire de la Révolution Française par Deux Amis de la Liberté*, Vol. II., p. 228.

by a caste habituated to oppression, you do not mean that they give away a single, simple, tangible thing, and that *that* is the end of it;—not at all. You mean that they give up old habits of thought,—habits of action. You mean that every day of their lives thereafter they are to give up a habit, or a fancy, or a comfort. No mere promises of theirs to do this can be trusted. There must be guarantees fixed immutably, bedded into the constitution,—clamped into the laws. That same anchoring of liberties, and not “*transports et l’effusion de sentiments genereux*,” is statesmanship.

These concessions were not thus secured. The old habits of oppression again got the upper hand. The upper class became as hostile to liberty and peace as ever.

Then thundered through France the Revolution. It *must* come;—that great and good French Revolution which did more to advance mankind in ten years than had been done politically in ten centuries,—which cost fewer lives to establish great principles than the Grand Monarque had flung away to gratify his whimsies! The right hand of the Almighty was behind it.

I refuse at the will of English Tory historians to lament more over the sufferings that besotted caste of oppressors brought upon themselves during those three years, than over the sufferings they brought upon the people during three times three centuries.*

The great thing was now partially done which Louis XI. and Richelieu had left entirely undone. The lower class were not merely freed from serfdom; they received guarantees of full civil rights.†

So far all was well, but at another point the constituent assembly stumbled. They were not bold enough to give full *political* rights. They thought the peasantry too ignorant—

* Any American, whose ideas have been wrested Torywise by Alison, can satisfy himself of the utter inability of an English Tory to write any history involving questions of liberty, by simply looking at Chancellor Kent's notes attached to the chapter on America in the American reprint of Alison's History of Europe.

† *Constitution de 1791, Titre Premier.*

too much debased by a long servitude, to be entrusted with political rights,—therefore they denied them, and invented for them “passive citizenship.”*

It was skillfully devised, but none the less fatal. The denial of political rights to the enfranchised was one of the two great causes of the destruction of the Constitution of 1791, and of the inauguration of the Reign of Terror.

Political rights could not be refused long. As they could not be obtained in peace the freed peasantry never allowed France rest until it gained them by long years of bloodshed and anarchy. Revolution after revolution has failed of full results. Dynasty after dynasty has failed to give quiet until a great statesman in our own time, Napoleon III., has been bold enough to make suffrage universal.

Whatever the first French Revolution failed to do, it failed to do mainly by lack of bold faith in giving *political* rights;—whatever it succeeded in doing, it succeeded by giving full *civil* rights.

When Louis XVIII. was brought back by foreign bayonets, the nobility also came back jubilant; all seemed about to give France over to her old caste of oppressors. The revolution was gone, its great theories were gone, its great men were swept away by death and by discouragement worse than death.

But one barrier stood between France and all her old misery. That barrier stood firm; it was the enfranchised peasantry—possessing civil rights and confiscated property in land. Against these the whole might of the nobility beat in vain.

Peace came, and with peace prosperity. France had been fearfully shattered by ages of evil administration and false political economy; she had been devastated by wars without and within; she had been plundered of an immense indemnity by the allies; the best of her people had been swept off by conscriptions; but under the distribution of lands to the former serfs, and the full guarantee of civil rights and the germs of political rights, the nation showed an energy in recuperation

* *Constitution de 1791, Titre III., Sect. 2, Art. 1.*

and a breadth of prosperity never before known in all her history.

There are other nations which, did time allow, might be summoned before us to aid our insight into the tendencies of castes habituated to oppression.

I might show from the annals of Germany how such a caste, having dragged the country through a thousand years of anarchy, have left it in chronic disunion,—the loss of all natural consideration, and oft-recurring civil wars, one of which is now devastating her.*

I might show from the history of Russia how the despotism of the Autocrat has been made necessary to save the empire from a worse foe—from a serf-mastering aristocracy. And I might go further and show how the statesmanship which has emancipated the lower class in Russia has recognized the great truth that the nation is not safe against the aristocracy—that no barrier can stand against them except the enfranchised endowed with rights and lands.†

But I am aware that an objection to this estimate of the noxious activity of an Aristocracy may be raised from the history of England.

It may be said that there the course of the nobles has been different—that some of the hardest battles against tyrants have been won by combination of nobles, that they have laid the foundations of free institutions, that, under monarchs who have hated national liberty, nobles have been among the foremost martyrs.

Let us look candidly at this.

It is true that the Earl of Pembroke and the Barons of England led the struggle for Magna Charta; it is true that the Earl of Leicester and his associate barons summoned the first

* Any one wishing to see how that inevitable moral debasement came upon the German aristocracy, and in general what the oppressive caste came to finally, can find enough in the 2d vol. of Menzel's History of Germany.

† Gerbertzoff, *Hist. de la Civilisation en Russie*. Haxthausen, *Etudes sur la Russie*. A full sketch of the Rise and Decline of the serf system in Russia I have attempted in the Atlantic Monthly, Vol. X., page 538.

really representative Parliament;* it is true that Surrey and Raleigh and Russell suffered martyrdom at the hands of tyrants.

It is true, moreover, that English nobles have not generally been so turbulent in what I have called the Vitriolic period, nor so debased in the Narcotic period, as most other European Aristocracies. They were, indeed, very violent in the wars of the Roses,—many of them were very debased under Charles the Second, and again under the first and last Georges, and it is quite likely will be again under that very unpromising ruler, Albert Edward, who seems developing the head of George the Third and the heart of George the Fourth†—but they have never been quite so violent or debased as the Continental nobles at similar periods.

But all this, so far from weakening the thesis I support, strengthens it—nay, clenches it.

For the nobility of England, less than any other in Europe, was based upon the oppression of a subject class. From the earliest period when law begins to be established in England we find that the serf system begins to be extinguished. The courts of law quietly adopted and steadily maintained the principle that in any question between lord and serf the presumption was in favor of the inferior's right to liberty rather than the superior's right to property.‡ The whole current set that way, and we find growing in England that middle class, steady and sturdy by the possession of rights, which won Agincourt and Crecy and Marston Moor and Worcester,—which made her country a garden and her cities marts for the world.§

* *Creasy's History of English Constitution*;—but Hume says of Leicester's Parliament, that it was in the intention of reducing forever both the King and the people under the arbitrary power of a very narrow tyranny, which must have terminated either in anarchy or in violent usurpation and tyranny. *Hist. of England*, Chap. XII.

† I perhaps do the last two Georges injustice. Neither of them would have publicly insulted men of letters and science as the Prince of Wales has several times done recently.

‡ *Creasy*, Chap. IX.

§ *Fischel on English Constitution*, Chap. I., pp. 9, 11. Also *Stephens' Edition of De Lolme*.

It is because England had so little of a serf-ruling caste in her history that she has been saved from so many of the calamities which have befallen other nations.

And there is another great difference between England and other nations, a difference of tremendous import. She has not stopped after making her lower classes nominally free. She has given them full civil rights and a constantly increasing share of political rights. Thus she has made them guardians of freedom. This is the great reason why her nobility have not destroyed her. This enfranchised class has been a barrier against aristocratic encroachment.

And yet in so far as the upper caste of England have partaken of traditions and habits of oppression they have deeply injured their country. Not a single great modern measure which they have not bitterly opposed.

The Repeal of the Corn Laws, the Abolition of Tests, the Reform Bill, the improvement of the Universities—these and a score more of great measures nearly as important, they have fought to the last.*

To them is mainly due that grasping of lands which has brought so much misery on the working class.†

To them is due that cold-blooded dealing with Lafayette and Bailly and other patriots of the French Revolution, which finally resulted in the Brunswick Manifesto and the Reign of Terror.

To them and their followers is due that most stupid crime which any nation ever committed in its foreign policy—the bitter, cowardly injustice toward our own Republic in its recent struggle.

This is what the *remnant* of caste-spirit in England has accomplished, and it is only because it has not been habituated to oppression by serf-owning, and because it was held in check by a lower class possessing civil and political rights, that it was not frightful in turbulence and debauchery.

So stands modern history as it bears upon the thesis I have proposed.

* For best account of this, see May's Constitutional History.

† See Kay's Social Condition of English People.

It shows a man-mastering caste, even when its man-mastering has passed from a fact into a tradition, to be the most frequent foe and the most determined with which nations have to grapple. By its erection of a substitute for patriotism, it is of all foes the most intractable; by its erection of a substitute for political morality, the most deceptive; by its proneness to disunion and disintegration, the most bewildering; by its habit of calling for the intervention of foreign powers, the most disheartening; by its morbid sensitiveness over pretended rights, the most watchful; in its unscrupulousness, the most determined; by its brilliancy, the most powerful in cheating the world into sympathy.

But history gives more than this. To the thesis I have advanced it gives, as you have seen, a corollary. Having shown what foe to right and liberty is most vigorous and noxious, it shows how alone that foe can be conquered and permanently dethroned. The lesson of failures and successes in the world's history points to one course, and to that alone.

Here conquest cannot do it; spasmodic severity cannot do it; wheedling of material interests, orating up patriotic interests, cannot do it. History shows just one course. *First, the oppressive caste must be put down at no matter what outlay of blood and treasure; next, it must be kept dethroned by erecting a living, growing barrier against its return to power, and the only way of erecting that barrier is by guaranteeing civil rights in full, and political rights at least in germ, to the subject class.*

Herein is written the greatness or littleness of nations—herein is written the failure or success of their great struggles. In all history, those be the great nations which have boldly grappled with political dragons, and not only put them down but *kept* them down.

The work of saving a nation from an oligarchy then is two fold. It is not finished until both parts are completed. Nations forget this at their peril. Nearly every great modern revolution wherein has been gain to liberty has had to be fought over a second time. So it was with the English Revolution of 1642. So it was with the French Revolutions of

1789 and 1830. What has been gained by bravery has been lost by treachery. Nations have forgotten that vigorous fighting to gain liberty must be followed by sound planning to secure it.

What is this sound planning? Is it superiority in duplicity? Not at all; it is the only planning which insists on frank dealing. Is it based on cupidity? Not at all; it is based on Right. Is it centered in Revenge? Not at all; its centre is Mercy and its circumference is Justice. It may say to the discomfited oppressor, you shall have Mercy; but it must say to the enfranchised, you shall have Justice.

Acknowledging this, Suger and the great mediaeval statesmen succeeded; ignoring this, Louis XI., Richelieu, and a host of great modern statesmen failed.

To keep the haughty and turbulent caste of oppressors in their proper relations, the central authority in every nation has been obliged to form a close alliance with the down-trodden caste of workers. If these have been ignorant it has had to instruct them; if they have been wretched, it has had to raise them; and the simple way—nay, the only way to instruct and raise them has been to give them rights, civil and political, which will force them to raise and instruct themselves.

But it may be said that some subject classes are *too low* thus to be lifted—that there are some races too weak to be thus wrought into a barrier against aristocracy. I deny it. For history denies it. The race is not yet discovered in which the average man is not better and safer with rights than without them.

Think you that *your* ancestors were so much better than *other* subject classes? Look into any town directory. The names show an overwhelming majority of us descendants of European serfs and peasantry. I defy you to find any body of men more degraded and stupid than our ancestors.

Do you boast Anglo-Saxon ancestry?—look at Charles Kingsley's picture in Hereward of the great banquet, the apotheosis of wolfishness and piggishness; or look at Walter Scott's delineation in Ivanhoe of Gurth the swine-herd, dressed in skins, the brass collar soldered about his neck like

the collar of a dog, and upon it the inscription, "Gurth the born thrall of Cedric."

Do you boast French ancestry?—look into Orderic Vital, or Froissart, or De Comines, and see what manner of man was your ancestor, "*Jacques Bonhomme*"—kicked, cuffed, plundered, murdered, robbed of the honor of his wife and the custody of his children, not allowed to wear good clothing,* not recognized as a man and a brother,† not indeed in early times recognized as a man at all.‡

Do you boast German ancestry?—look at Luther's letters and see how the unutterable stupidity of your ancestors vexed him.

Yet from these progenitors of yours, kept besotted and degraded through centuries by oppression, have, by comparatively a few years of freedom, been developed the barriers which have saved modern states.

Is it said that this bestowal of rights on the oppressed is dangerous? History is full of proofs that the faith in Heaven's justice which has led statesmen to solve great difficulties by *bestowing* rights has proved far more safe than the attempt to evade great difficulties by *withholding* rights.§

Is it said that the anarchic tendencies of an oppressive caste can be overcome by compromise and barter? History shows that the chances in trickery and barter are immensely in their favor.

Is it said that the era of such dangers is past—that *civilization* will modify the nature of oppressive castes? That is the most dangerous delusion of all. In all annals, a class, whether rough citizens as in Poland, or smooth gentlemen as in France, based on traditions or habits of oppression, has proved a *reptile*

* † Among the grievances put forth by the nobles at the States General of 1614, one was that the wives of the common people wore too good clothing; another was that an orator of the third estate had dared call the nobles their brothers. Sir James Stephens' Lectures.

‡ For a very striking summary of this see Henri Martin's *Hist. de France*, vol. v., p. 193.

§ I know of but one plausible exception to this rule—that of the failure of Joseph II. in his dealings with the Rhine provinces. The case of Louis XVI. is no exception, for he was always taking back secretly what he had given openly.

caste. Its coat may be mottled with romance, and smooth with sophistry, and glossy with civilization ;—it may wind itself gracefully in chivalric courses ; but its fangs will be found none the less venomous, its attacks none the less cruel, its skill in prolonging its reptile life, even after seeming death wounds, none the less deceitful.

Is it said that to grapple with such a reptile caste is dangerous ? History shows not one example where the plain, hardy people have boldly faced it and throttled it and not conquered it.

The course is plain, and there is but one. Strike until the reptile caste spirit is scotched ; then pile upon it a new fabric of civil and political rights until its whole organism of evil is crushed forever.

For this policy alone speaks the whole history of man,—to this policy alone stand pledged all the attributes of God.

THE MESSAGE
OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE TWENTIETH.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE CLASS OF 1853, IN THE CHAPEL OF YALE
COLLEGE, 26 JUNE. 1883,

BY

ANDREW DICKSON WHITE.

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ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :—

Sundry historians of late years have attempted to cut the history of mankind into convenient lengths, each a century long, to assign to each its own character and flavor, to label each with a name or formula, and then to deliver over these parcels thus neatly ticketed for stowage in our memories.

It needs not much acuteness to see that such division must be merely fanciful and such learning mainly lumber. Great movements in history of course take no account of the numerals which happen to get themselves attached to the years. Such movements overlap the ends of centuries or come short of them ; the only sense in which a century has a character and work of its own is simply the sense in which any long period, as human life goes, encloses some great movement and therefore teaches some great lesson.

It is in this sense that I ask you, my friends and classmates, to think upon a subject which has been suggested by our meeting ; that subject is, **THE MESSAGE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE TWENTIETH.** For, whatever great movement may have been enclosed in this period known as the nineteenth century, and therefore whatever message it may have for its successor, we, my classmates, may be fairly supposed to have at least some inkling of it. Our lives began just at the close of its first quarter, and from that first quarter we derived our parental traditions ; our boyhood and youth filled the second quarter ; the third quarter encloses our life in these halls and our activity since ; the fourth will see the consummation of our work—the last of it. Our life, then, is coincident with this nineteenth century. Its life has been and is in our veins ; its hopes, its struggles, its triumphs, its longings, we know ; something of its shortcomings, too, we ought to know.

Our earliest years before we met here saw that movement against the political, social and religious reaction which marked the first part of this century; but, during the four years which we passed here, came the culmination of a reaction against this reaction;—human slavery dominant and aggressive in our own country; a usurping imperialism dominant and aggressive in Europe.

What we have seen since you all know. It has been, indeed, a great epoch: slavery and disunion ended in the United States, and with the establishment of a stronger brotherhood than ever between North and South; serfdom blotted out in Russia; cunning despotic methods utterly brought to naught in France; stupid despotic methods and disunion brought to naught in Germany and Italy.

Surely from the midst of an epoch like this a message can be sent; surely the thoughtful men of this century have something to say to the thoughtful men of the next century.

A word now as to the messengers. We shall hardly carry the message over the border of the next century ourselves. To a few tottering old men of our dear class of '53, it will be granted to look with straining eyes over the boundary into the twentieth century. But even these can do little to make themselves heard then. Most of us shall not see it; but before us and around us, nay, in our own families, are the men who shall see it; the men who go forth from these dear shades to-morrow are girding themselves for it. Often as I have stood in the presence of such bands of youthful messengers, I have never been able to resist a feeling of awe—as in my boyhood when I stood before men who were soon to see Palestine and the far East, or the Golden Gates of the West, and the Islands of the Pacific. The old story of St. Filippo Neri at Rome comes back to me, who in the days of the Elizabethan persecutions made men bring him out into the open air and set him opposite the door of the Papal College at Rome that he might look into the faces of the English students destined to go forth to triumph or to martyrdom for the faith in far-off heretic England.

I have stood before sundry men, great as things go in this world: pontiffs who sway the consciences of hundreds of millions; monarchs whose word is law through vast empires; the

chosen rulers of great free republics; generals noted in history; orators, statesmen, men of letters, who shall perhaps be read centuries hence; but I confess that never, before any of these, have I felt such awe as at times in the presence of a troop of these young messengers going forth into that coming century which we are not to see, who are to know the outcome of much that now fills us with hope or dread, who are to pass through the veil which we can never pass—the veil which hides from us the wonders and the terrors of the twentieth century. There is to me a deep mystery behind their young faces—a mystery deeper than any within the breast of potentate or pontiff or leader of men whose history is mainly past and known.

What, now, is the message?

There are doubtless many special words of warning or words of cheer which we would send. Not unlikely each of us has some pet theory of his own which he would throw over the border into the next century, if he could. But is there not some general statement into which we can compress our whole message? Let me attempt it.

We all remember vividly those first days when we came under the direct instruction of that honored teacher whom a kind Providence permits us again to see this day—Theodore Dwight Woolsey. We all remember how under his guidance we then learned that striking generalization of Guizot regarding the broad difference between the civilizations of antiquity and those of modern Europe. Though simple, it is one of the most fruitful contributions to modern thought. Guizot shows that, as a rule, the evolution of each of those great phases of ancient civilization was in obedience to some dominant principle, to some element which gained complete mastery, and developed civilization in subordination to itself. He shows how, as a consequence of this domination of a single element, each of those ancient civilizations either sank into immobility, as in Egypt or in India, or was developed with astonishing rapidity and brilliancy only to decline and decay just as rapidly, as in Greece and the commercial communities of the Mediterranean.

On the other hand, he shows that, in the modern civilization of Europe, no one element has ever become powerful enough

to exercise permanent despotism over the others; that many strong elements have existed together, stimulating each other, restraining each other, as monarchy, ecclesiasticism, aristocracy, municipal liberty; and that, as a consequence, European civilization is far more rich and varied than the ancient, far longer-lived, enclosing in itself principles and powers which by their action on each other constantly renew the youth of modern states.

Since Guizot, and even since we read him here together, this generalization has been confirmed by most striking examples. Under our own eyes, throughout the world, we have seen it verified.

In order to prepare ourselves more fully for the application of this truth which I purpose to make, take some of the simplest examples we have ourselves seen—nay, which we are to-day seeing—and simplest of all, England. Since our boyhood, she has been renewed and largely rebuilt, religiously, politically, socially. The Reform Bill, which stands at the beginning of this regeneration, virtually called into being a great new element in English civilization, so that in addition to the old forces, monarchy, aristocracy, and the church, we have new forces stimulating and modifying the old and each other; a great, strong middle class endowed with political rights, a new race of political thinkers, a new race of religious thinkers, a new race of men of letters, artists, scholars, a new press, Pusey and Arnold, Newman and Tait, Sir William Hamilton and Herbert Spencer, Cobden and Ruskin, Carlyle and Tennyson, Havelock and Wolseley, Disraeli and Gladstone, Huxley and Goldwin Smith, Millais and Robert Stephenson, Oxford and London Universities, Cambridge University and Owens College, the *Standard* and the *News*, *Blackwood* and *The Nineteenth Century*, aristocrat and plutocrat and constitutional monarchist and democrat—all have wrought together, the ideas of neither supreme, and as a resultant we have the most astonishing example in history of a well-ordered reformation and renovation of an ancient state, a result far more satisfactory in the present, far more prophetic of good in the future, than any one of these men or principles, even the best, could have brought about alone.

Suppose an England of to-day developed during the last thirty

years out of the ideas of any one of the greatest of these geniuses, or the most fruitful of these principles, how poor would have been the outcome as compared to this result achieved by the working together of all! Imagine the England of to-day developed entirely according to the ideas of the greatest of these—Newman or Carlyle or Mill or Cobden or Ruskin—or imagine an England in which the military element or commercial element alone, or even the reform element alone, is dominant; how poor the result compared with that great varied civilization we now see, and how poor the chance for its perpetuity compared with this present guaranty of her future. With all the faults of England, every thinking man can see that Anglo-Saxon liberty has taken a new lease of life and has begun a new career.

Take next Germany. The truth that the life of nations is strengthened and lengthened by variety in the elements of civilization has here perhaps its strongest recent confirmation. For generations the element of princely authority had developed society in defiance of the simplest laws of politics. Religious life, political life, literature, art, seemed lost, but during the last years of the last century and all the years of this, thus far, have been developing in Germany other great elements, and chief among these a great thinking class centering in the universities, a new power steady and vast. Then, too, militarism, evolved as it was out of the struggle with the first Napoleon, though indeed at fearful cost, has given some noble ideals, and trained men in some virtues. Commercial enterprise has brought into being a new class which can modify the prejudices of a territorial aristocracy. Literature, philosophy, art, science, each has become a recognized power making itself felt in the sum of things. Kant holds in check to-day a vast mob of anti-social forces; Lessing and Gutzkow stand as barriers against bigotry; Schiller, against political despotism; Arndt and a host of others, against disunion; Goethe, against Philistinism; a poem of Freiligrath or a discourse of Fichte is as much a power as the army of a German prince; a legion of scientific men stand ready to wither blatant unreason.

Governmental authority, popular initiative, sturdy legality, industrialism, thoughtful socialism,—all have their strong representatives. All these elements work together with much din,

yet not to produce chaos, but to educe a higher order from chaos. Out of these diverse elements thus stimulating and modifying each other, comes the new Germany, greater, stronger, more lasting than the old.

Look now at Italy. When we studied together here, she was but a mere geographical expression. The Madaii family were in prison at Florence for reading their Bible, and the little Mortara in the monastery at Rome—torn from his Jewish mother to save his soul. But since those days Italy has been rebuilt, has become great and strong. In no country of continental Europe is there so promising a crop of earnest young thinkers. Why? Simply because, beside the principle of legitimate authority in State and Church, strong as it was under Papal and Austrian rule, there have always been kept alive the great traditions of liberty, of literature, of science, of art, of political thought, of constitutional freedom. Nay, more, to-day her strength lies in the fact that not one of these elements, not even the best of them, is strong enough to take full possession of society. Perhaps one of her greatest pieces of good fortune, at this moment, is the very thing which ardent lovers of liberty are prone to think her worst fortune, namely, that the idea of liberty and unity is not strong enough to take complete control; that the Church and the reactionary party remain strong enough to keep the liberty-loving party somewhat in check, thus imposing upon it unity, steadiness, circumspection. But for this necessity of keeping its ranks in order and its forces well in hand—a necessity imposed by the powerful Papal foe—the party of constitutional liberty in Italy would long since have split into factions, each aiming to tear the heart out of the other. The greatest guaranty for the perpetuity of Cavour's Italy lies in this very fact, that a strong Church, a strong State, a strong body of political thinkers, idealists, realists, men of science, poets, artists, engineers, land owners, brain owners,—all exist and modify each other's action. Italy does not yield her destiny entirely either to Pope or to King or philosopher or millionaire or mob orator. This struggle between the elements of the new civilization in Italy is evidently to continue. The modern movement is beset by foes strong and keen and circumspect; therefore it, too, must be strong and keen and circumspect, and in this necessity lies the best hope of Italy.

Look now, on the other hand, at those States in our time where one element has taken possession of society. Take first Spain. Here we have a nation which has shown even in our own century certain very staunch and honorable qualities, a patriotism robust enough to baffle Napoleon when all the rest of Europe groveled beneath his feet. And yet we have seen attempt after attempt at the revival of civilization and political life in the Spanish peninsula all brought to naught, and in such a way as to show that for generations nothing can be done. Not all the courage of that sturdy people, not all their physical and moral robustness avail. In vain the energy of Prim, in vain the genius of Castelar. And why? One element has complete control—authority in Church and State—and it has had control so long that it has dried up the very roots of science and literature and liberty and industrialism. There is indeed at this moment a very brilliant growth of art, perhaps the most brilliant in Europe, but it is evidently temporary. It is a beautiful flower springing up amid ruins: Fortune dropped the seed; the growth of it has come to bloom in the beauties of Madrazo and his compeers, but the plant is surely doomed to perish for want of depth of soil. The recent history of Spanish literature and philosophy shows this. Balmès in any other country would have developed into a great historian and philosopher; in Spain he became merely a church apologist.

Take next Russia, a nation which has some striking characteristics in its favor, the largest homogeneous population under any single sway, every element of wealth, better institutional foundations for municipal liberty than any other nation in continental Europe; and yet the principle of monarchical authority is so strong that all other elements, church, press, science, literature, die in its shade.

Take another example nearer home, the Spanish Republics of Central and South America, colonized by one of the strongest of races, yet perhaps the most conspicuous failures in all modern history,—each an example of everything which a nation should not be, society and the individual alike dwarfed. And why? Simply because one element—a loose popularism, an ultra democracy, unchecked by institutions—

has gained complete control. The prejudice, the whimsey of the majority is law; the absolute despotism of the majority, political and religious, is the one principle in accordance with which everything must be developed. No constitutions have been created which could hold it in check. The will of an unenlightened people is supreme at every moment and in everything. The whimsey of to-day upsets the whimsey of yesterday. The demagogue representing the whimsey of to-day in accordance with this principle upsets the constituted authority of yesterday.

It was once made my duty to examine and report officially upon one of these republics where this despotism of popular whims had held sway until nothing worth having was left. Upon the most fertile of soils, with rich mines beneath it, with every source of wealth, not an evidence of the simplest creations of modern civilization was left in that republic; not a steam engine, not a telegraphic instrument, literally not a bridge or a plow from one end of the republic to the other.

Out of all these republics to-day in which the unchecked supremacy of the individual will is the one element in civilization, only two show any signs of real life.

The generalization, then, of Guizot is thus far proven not merely in ancient and remote States, but immediately about us; and the question now arises, How stands our own republic with reference to this truth? Here, in my judgment, lies the central point of our message.

Bear in mind that all these contemporary nations of ours, mentioned thus far, go to prove the correctness of Guizot's generalization on all save one point. Germany, England, Italy, and we might add France, by their constant renewal of activity, by their re-birth into new and strong life through this conflict of elements; Spain, Russia, the Spanish republics, and we might add the Turkish empire, by their decline into immobility under the despotism of a single element—cover the first two leading points in Guizot's argument.

But have we any example bearing upon his remaining point—the statement that the complete sway of a single element in a nation's civilization may also give an extraordinary impulse, produce a rapid and brilliant development, but that it must also bring on afterwards rapid decline and final sterility.

Of the first part of his assertion, that the sway of a single dominant element may produce a most rapid and brilliant development of civilization, I believe that the United States affords one of the most striking proofs in history.

As to the fact of this rapid development, I need hardly detain you. You have stood in daily amazement at the evidences of it during the last thirty years, and if you have been inclined not to heed it, your attention has been called to it by numberless reports and orations.

But now comes the next question. What has produced this development? Is it the working together of various elements, each strong, each stimulating, modifying, and curbing the others, no one element lording it over the others; or has it been produced in obedience to some one dominant element which has gradually obtained complete control? Here, too, little discussion is needed. There is certainly little, if anything, of the military spirit as a steady force in the onward movement of our civilization. The military spirit has burst out once or twice in our history very vigorously, and then as quickly subsided. It is hardly a spirit of religious propagandism. As a rule, the clergyman has not led great migrations. In the opening up of our vast West there has been little if anything like the coming in of bodies of men whose paramount spirit is religious, led by religious men,—as our ancestors came into New England. Still less has it been the aristocratic spirit—strong men anxious to found petty personal sovereignties; and least of all a monarchical spirit anxious to extend an empire. Nor has it been a political spirit. The last slight trace of pioneering in a political interest we saw during our college days in Kansas and Nebraska. Since that time there has never been anything of that kind. What is, then, this force? I need hardly tell you that the one element which has become not merely dominant, but all-prevailing, is a combination of the industrial spirit with the trade spirit, or, if you please to combine both in a name, perhaps the word *mercantilism* will serve our present purpose. Here is evidently the mind which moves the mass. The railways, canals, telegraphs, manufactures, mines, furnaces, city after city made up of lines of shops, great hotels filled with dyspeptics, long trains of cars filled

with hurrying men and jaded women—all these outward visible signs point to this one inward and spiritual grace.

But you may say that mercantilism is but a pioneer spirit, a preliminary phase; that it is but the thin edge of the wedge; that elements essentially stronger will follow. Let us look a little closer,—below this spirit controlling and directing these visible manifestations of our civilization. I believe that we shall find that, so far from relatively diminishing, it is relatively increasing; that, so far from begetting better elements of civilization, it is now beginning to stifle them,—that it is now beginning to show itself a despotic element, crushing other elements of civilization which are to add anything to the earth's history; that, in fact—and I say it in all soberness—mercantilism in great cities and in small towns, in society and in the individual, is becoming a disease, certainly feverish, possibly cancerous.

Look at some of the other elements indispensable in any great republican civilization and take, first of all, the political spirit. Its manifestation in American patriotism is strong; who shall deny it, since, in obedience to this feeling, such prodigies of valor, such examples of self-sacrifice, have been exhibited on both sides in our recent civil war. And we may hope that in any future great crisis commercial interest will be again put beneath the feet of political interest. But the life of a nation does not consist of great crises; what we are talking about is the steady normal march of our civilization.

And how does patriotism hold its own in this daily life against mercantilism. Glance for a moment over the greatest political questions now before this nation. One is unquestionably the education of those millions set free and endowed with citizenship in the civil war; and indeed, not only of the colored population, but of the white population in many States. It is a question of prodigious import; for it is the question of "educating our masters." Every thinking man in the country accepts the principle that a controlling body of illiterate voters will in the long run, ruin any country. To grapple with a question of this sort is worthy of the greatest of statesmen; and yet session after session of our national legislature passes

by, and though it is made the text for a few speeches the great majority of the representatives simply mirror the feeling of the vast majority of the people when they pass it by without a thought.

Take another question—the reform of our civil service. At this hour our civil service presents many features which have been sloughed off by every other leading nation. More and more it has become evident that some reform in this respect is a condition of national honor, indeed of any decent national existence. And yet how little thought or attention can our people or our public bodies be induced to give to it. They have been, indeed, ready to hurry it off the scene, but real thought they have not given to it. They are like the people of Gadara: they have simply besought the Reformer “to depart out of their coasts.”

Take another political question probably more critical than any of the others—the rectification of our electoral college system. With the exception of a few jurists in our national councils, the nation can hardly be induced to give it a thought; and yet the want of a proper settlement of it has brought us once to the brink of civil war, and may do so again.

What, then, among all the great questions, is the one of which we hear the most? Simply the tariff question; the question which has to do with trade and manufactures. I do not dispute its great importance, but I do assert that in any normal condition of political activity, in any state where all the elements of civilization are in well coördinated action, it would certainly be the last of these four great questions to be taken up. The first three of these questions would have our first and best thoughts, and, if any question were adjourned, it would be the tariff question. We would say that a national nucleus for a system of education must be provided for in each State which does not now possess it. We would also say that a reformation of the civil service must have earnest thought and careful discussion. We would also say that the electoral college system must be brought into better form, as the most dangerous part of our governmental machinery, liable to plunge us into South American politics at any moment. We would say that, if anything waits, it must be the question

whether we are to have a few more or a few less manufactures during the next few years. Such, under a proper coördination of the various elements of a great civilization, would be the working of our minds. As a matter of fact the tariff is the *only* question. The great majority of our citizens give to the other questions hardly a thought. Mercantilism is the one controlling element; it seems to be eating out not only the disposition but the power of political thinking.

I do not deny that noble statesmen are standing against the current. But is it not evident that mercantile men and methods have invaded our national and State legislatures as we never in our earlier days thought it possible? I am no mere *laudator temporis acti*—indeed I think the present time is the best, on the whole, of all times—I am not at all disposed to accept the prevalent cant about corruption; but suppose that any one had told us in our college days, as we pondered the speeches of Webster and Calhoun and Clay and Sumner and Seward and Everett, that great commonwealths would arise in which United States senatorships would be virtually put up to the highest bidder term after term, until such a mode of securing a position in our highest council would be looked upon as natural and normal!

Again, I think that no thoughtful man will disagree with my statement that the business enterprises of the country are drawing into their service a vast deal of that ability which formerly went into the service of the State;—that here, too, the mercantile spirit shows itself stronger than the political spirit. I might call your attention to political bodies still nearer the people,—to methods well known to be powerful, to say the least, in many of our State legislatures; but I will take a test nearer home. Take our municipalities; and here I wish to deliberately state a fact easy of verification,—the fact that whereas, as a rule, in other civilized countries municipal governments have been steadily improving until they have been made generally honest and serviceable, our own, as a rule, are the worst in the world, and they are steadily growing worse every day. Take a fact which I had recently occasion to allude to before another audience.

The city of Berlin in size and rapidity of growth may be

compared to New York. It contains twelve hundred thousand inhabitants, and its population has tripled within the last thirty years. It has had to grapple with far greater difficulties, in many respects, than those of our own metropolis, and especially is this the case in regard to sanitary precautions. And yet the difference is far in favor of the foreign city. While Berlin has a municipal life at the same time dignified and economical, with streets well paved and clean, with a most costly system of drainage, with noble public buildings, with great works of art in these, as well as in her parks and squares, and with life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness better guarded by far than in our own metropolis—the whole government is carried on by its citizens for but a trifle more than the interest on the public debt of the city of New York.

There is in the whole municipal administration of that foreign city an economy and dignity of which our own great cities know little or nothing. To the city councils of Germany men of the highest character and attainments are elected and are proud to take their seats at the city hall. Rudolf Gneist, famed as a professor of law throughout Europe, a member of the Imperial Parliament, the representative of the Emperor William as arbitrator between the United States and Great Britain in the matter of the northwestern boundary, is a member of the Berlin town council, and with him are associated others of similar standing.

And why this difference? The immediate cause is that we have carelessly neglected the fundamental principle of municipal government,—the fact that a city is a corporation, as well as a political body, and that only as a corporation can the financial and business interests of a city ever be properly managed. But when we assign this cause we do not get to the bottom of the difficulty. For the question comes up, why is this mistake not seen and remedied? Here I come into the line of my present thought. The real reason is that the great majority of active men in our cities will not spare the time for thorough and consecutive political thinking. There are indeed, from time to time, spasmodic efforts in our great cities, but as a rule the mercantile spirit predominates over the political spirit. The affairs of the city are virtually handed over to a few men

who make politics, so-called, a business. The very germ of the difficulty was touched once in my presence by a leading man of business in our great metropolis, who said: "We have thought this thing over and we find that it pays better to neglect our city affairs than to attend to them; that we can make more money in the time required for the full discharge of our political duties than the politicians can steal from us on account of our not discharging them." Here is the simple *naïve* expression in municipal matters of the mercantile spirit entirely dominant over the political spirit.

You may say that this is because New York is a "foreign city." Unfortunately for this argument, the same evils are complained of in nearly every city, large or small. I have myself seen within the past year, in one of our vigorous interior cities, not only the rights but the safety of a large portion of the populace made merchandise of by a common council, and franchises for which the city might easily have secured a million given away evidently for promise of petty advantage to a few local managers.

Take next the *social* effects. I might refer to the anti-social principles filtering down from the leaders in mercantilism into the lower strata of society. I might remind you that nothing is so sure to bring on social disintegration as the senseless luxury or crude selfishness of great millionaires. The only thing that makes great millionaires tolerable in society is the noble expenditure of their money. Millionaires who simply accumulate to the end of their days are mere fatty tumors on the body politic; millionaires who set an example of senseless luxury are simply cancers.

I might call your attention to the criminal procedure of the country and show how safeguards thrown about criminals in the fifteenth century as protections to the innocent are still kept up in the nineteenth as protections to the guilty; how, from the want of any interest in the subject by the people at large, we have drifted into a mode of dealing with criminals which has made crime a profession in all our great cities, which has made criminals more secure from punishment here than in any other civilized land, and which is making jury trial a farce. Here, by the way, is one of the lesser methods by which the

dominant mercantilism is eating out a proper social spirit. Summon a jury in the most important matters you can name,—for the trial of the assassin of a President, for the trial of men charged with systematically plundering the nation and debauching the public service, for the trial of a seducer who has murdered the father of his victim; and see what sort of a jury you secure after the claims of the mercantile spirit are satisfied. I might, too, point to the hurry, the crush, the dying out of families, the dyspeptic type which enables an American to be recognized in any country.

But glance at some subordinate fields—take first *Education*. You will say, this surely is an exception. I am by no means so confident of this. Great things have indeed been done in this field. But the question is one of *relative* development; how stands the development of education compared with the material and mercantile development of the country? Our railways have become the greatest in the world, our hotels the most “palatial,” our internal lines of water communication the most complete; no nation has so great an extension of the telegraph; but how is it with our educational institutions *relatively*? Take the lower range first. As a matter of fact, we have made no such progress in extinguishing illiteracy as has been made in Germany. England, France, and Italy even, are rapidly developing a system of public schools far more complete and better thought out than any we can show, save, possibly, in two or three of our States.

Take now intermediate education. Here our progress has been even less satisfactory. After all these years, there are not in our whole land a score of intermediate high-schools worthy of comparison with any one of hundreds born or reborn within the last thirty years in various other countries.

Take the higher education. Progress has indeed been made. But the question is, what progress as compared with material progress? Compare the increase in the endowment of this honored and beloved university, as to all that pertains to literature, pure science and art, with the increase of the capital of any of your great railways; compare the increase in its buildings with the increase in the cost of great hotels and the houses of merchant princes; compare the advance in salaries to-day of

the most honored men in these institutions with the advance in the salaries of presidents of railroad companies, banks, insurance companies, etc.

Take next the field of *pure science*. Here the outlook seems better, but the most determined optimist could hardly claim that devotion to science has kept pace with devotion to material wealth in business enterprise.

Take the field of *literature*. Again I say that I am no pessimist; in spirit and belief I am an optimist; and yet I cannot shut my eyes to facts. In our college days we had in their bloom Irving, Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Prescott, Bancroft, Motley, Ticknor, Curtis, Whipple, with Warner, Clemens and Bret Harte on the horizon, to say nothing of many lesser lights. Some are gone, some are grown old. Do you discern any such array now appearing upon the horizon?

You may say that there is as much talent and genius now as then. I grant you better than that; I grant you that there is more; I only say that something has drawn or driven it out of literature. You may say that there are still poets. I grant that; we, of the class of '53, believe we know of two to whom the divine impulse has come. And yet these two are, first of all, business men. Mercantilism has been too strong for them; in an earlier day they would have taken up the traditions of the great singers.

Look next at *art*, and first of all sculpture. When we studied together in college, Crawford, Greenough, Powers, Story, Rogers, were in their prime, and about them a multitude of lesser lights. If art had developed as business has developed, there ought to be a score now where there were two or three then. What is the reality? Have those men left any considerable array of worthy successors?—if so, where are they?

In painting, at that same period, there were Cole, Elliott, Huntington, Page, Durand, Eastman Johnson, Church, Kensett, and many others. There were traditions of the art of Allston and Trumbull. How is it to-day? We see various names written up from time to time in the public prints, but where are the pictures? Those who saw the American gallery at the recent Exposition at Paris can tell where they were not. I speak entirely within bounds when I say that, of all the sad

displays which for the honor of the country one would wish blotted out, that was the saddest.

You may say that the feeling for art has been spreading and developing of late in a new direction. By all that, you perhaps mean the mania of the æsthetes,—boudoir pictures with Meissonier as the chief deity,—an art of mere fashions and whims; one year chamfered corners with decorations in crude red and black, another year rounded corners with decorations in peacock blue; one year a muddle of gold-leaf and green called an "arrangement," another year a muddle of silver-leaf and yellow called a "symphony;" one year what is called Gothic, another year what is called Queen Anne—all of which will probably ten years hence furnish the most woeful thing to look back upon in the history of art. The question in all this is simply, where is the virile art which commemorates great deeds, which stirs the hearts of men, which aids to make a nation something more than a shop, and its civilization really come to something in the sum of things? Here too, evidently, the mercantile spirit as expressed in industrial and mercantile enterprise of all sorts is infinitely surpassing art in all its branches, has dwarfed it, has drawn from it the men who could have strengthened it.

Take, finally, the *religious* element. No thoughtful man will underrate it. It still gives us examples of heroism; it still holds up ideals—almost the only ideals we have left; it is still a great power. I acknowledge my belief that were anything to arise making a simple sharp antagonism between trade on one hand and religion on the other, requiring martyrs and confessors on a great scale, religion would show a might of which many among us hardly dream. But there is no such crisis; there is no likelihood of such. The question is as to the comparative strength of these two elements in the ordinary normal development of our American civilization as it is now running. Make a few tests, the most simple, homely, everyday. Suppose that the introduction of Mohammedanism into any one of our great cities were sure to draw trade on a vast scale, to necessitate manufactures and railways; you know that you could secure at once contributions to build a mosque which would rival the Taj Mahal.

Suppose a vast revival in Buddhism in Asia. Is it not certain that we should immediately establish great stock companies for the manufacture of double back-action, duplex, patent-lever prayer wheels and praying machines? Nay, suppose that any powerful preacher in our great centers of trade should steadily denounce, not in the abstract but in the concrete, certain dominant mercantile sins, should picture them as every thinking man knows them, would he not in nine cases out of ten be practically treated as an enemy of what is best in the state? I grant you that certain branches of trade have been happily checked by the religious spirit as developed by Christian preachers—all honor to them for it—and still these are but a few successful skirmishes against an army whose onward march seems irresistible.

Take, finally, a test like that which we have applied in other cases. Walk along the main avenue of our great metropolitan city; enter the first Christian temple to which you come—the main church of one great denomination. You find in it an honored clergyman from Canada. Go on a little further to the church of another great denomination, there you find an honored clergyman from Wales; a little further, and you find another from England; a little further still, and another from Scotland; still a little further, and another from the north of Ireland; and to complete the list turn into the synagogue and hear a Rabbi from Germany.

Pass to another city, the very fountain of American culture, where the roots of all culture were planted in theology. You enter two of its most powerful churches, the centers of antagonistic schools of religious thought and feeling: both these pulpits are occupied by Englishmen.

All this is no mere chance—it is too large a fact to result from chance. The simple fact you observe is, that the greatest and most wealthy churches in the United States are beginning to supply their pulpits from other countries. I can see various reasons for this, but among these I see the fact that the business spirit, the mercantile spirit, is drawing our strongest young men to professions simply lucrative.

But take the *material* interest itself. Take that very business enterprise of the country which it is supposed this all-absorbing mercantilism is to help on.

Are there not some indications that we are even here—in this which we have made the all-in-all—making a mistake similar to that of those who, in stock-raising, breed in and in; that even in this which we have made the one great field, we are in danger of declining from the want of variety, the want of conflict and friction of thought, the want of stimulus to thought given by a variety of elements and powers.

Note a few symptoms. Go into your great cities; pass along your principal streets; read the names on the signs. Had you done this when we were together thirty years ago, you would have found the vast majority of these names distinctively Anglo-American. Read them and see what you will find now.

Take another point. This is a great maritime nation with an enormous seaboard. It formerly seemed about to concentrate in itself the carrying trade of the world. Where does it stand now? Where are the great lines of American steamers connecting us with foreign ports? You will say that the civil war blotted out our commerce. But that was twenty years ago, and a great, strong nation devoting itself above all to material interests should regain its commerce in twenty years. You will say that England is too powerful for us. True, but France, Germany and Austria have wrested a large portion of the steam carrying trade from England; even Italy and Belgium are making inroads into English transatlantic commerce.

Look at another symptom. You will say that this is the age of machinery. I grant it, and I grant that in the exercise of a certain sort of ingenuity America has astonished the world. In no country are fish-hooks and door-springs and wood screws and cheap clocks and second-class watches and small steam-engines and churns made with such ingenuity and rapidity; in no country are there in every town such immense numbers of men engaged in underselling each other. But what have we developed in the largest way to compare with the ship-yards of England and Scotland? What have we to show in the development of the iron and steel industry to be compared with the establishments of Krupp at Essen and Schneider at Creusot? What, in the industry called into being by electricity, to rival Siemens. The want of variety in the elements of our

civilization, the want of high ideals held up by such variety seems somehow to hold back material progress itself.

But you will say this is all pessimism. Nay, I once more maintain I am not a pessimist. By nature, by conviction, I am an optimist, and more so now than ever; and I hope now to prove this as I point out very briefly how this result of the development of our civilization under the sway of one great dominant principle, which has thus far shown itself, in strict accord with the generalization of Guizot, to have produced a vast and brilliant material development, may be prevented from leading to the weakening, decline, and sterility which that same generalization prophesies to us if that unchecked sway of a single principle continues.

What, then, is to be done? Mercantilism, necessitated at first by our circumstances and position, has been in the main a great blessing; it has been so under a simple law of history. How, in obedience to a similar inexorable law, shall it be prevented from becoming a curse?

Here, it seems to me, is the most important message from this century to the next.

For the great thing to be done is neither more nor less than to develop above all things other great elements of civilization now held in check which shall take their rightful place in the United States, which shall modify the mercantile spirit, which shall hold it in check while stimulating it, which shall make the history of our country something greater and broader than anything we have reached, or ever can reach under the sway of mercantilism alone.

What shall be these counter-elements of civilization? Monarchy, aristocracy, militarism we could not have if we would, we would not have if we could; what shall we have?

I answer simply that we must do all that we can to rear greater fabrics of philosophic thought, literary thought, scientific, artistic, political thought; to summon young men more and more into these fields, not as a matter of taste or social opportunity, but as a patriotic duty; to hold before them, not the incentive of mere gain or of mere pleasure or of mere reputation, but the ideal of a new and better civilization. The greatest work which the coming century has to do in this

country is to build up an aristocracy of thought and feeling which shall hold its own against the aristocracy of mercantilism. I would have, more and more, the appeal made to every young man who feels within him the ability for good or great things in any of these higher fields, to devote his powers to them as a sacred duty, no matter how strongly the mercantile spirit may draw him.

I would have this idea preached early and late,—that the man who has powers fitted for this higher service,—for the discovery or proclamation of religious truth or scientific truth, for literature, for science, for art, is false to himself and false to his country, if he deliberately puts his talents at the service of the mercantile spirit.

And as the guardian of such a movement, as the fortress in this century and the next against that material spirit which has lifted our country so rapidly, but which is sure to drag it down unless modified or held in check, I would strengthen at every point this venerable and beloved university and others like it throughout the country. Remiss indeed have the graduates and friends of our own honored Yale been in their treatment of her. She has never had the means to do a tithe of what she might do. She ought to be made strong enough, with more departments, more professors, more fellowships, to become one of a series of great rallying points and fortresses, and to hold constantly concentrated here a strong army ever active against mercantilism, materialism and Philistinism. She and her sister universities ought indeed to be provided with everything that brings science to bear on industry, with everything that tends to infuse labor with thought, for this will indeed tend to make industrialism and mercantilism more receptive of happy modifying influences; but most important of all is it to develop in these institutions great strongholds of pure Science, of Philosophy, of Literature, of Art, of everything which makes civilization more varied, richer, broader, stronger. So too, in every city and village throughout the country, everything should be strengthened which makes against the prevailing materialism and mercantilism. Every really fine church edifice, every noble picture, every statue, every memorial erected to a statesman or thinker or scholar or

writer or artist, which shows that men are really remembered for other things than the accumulation of dollars, will help the country against the tyranny of the mercantile spirit.

There is no occasion for pessimism here. One thing should certainly encourage us; and that is the evident instinct toward the creation of higher and better elements among the leaders of mercantilism themselves. In no other country do such men show such munificence in laying great foundations for a nobler future. The encouraging thing, the redeeming thing, in this mercantile phase of our civilization is that—encroaching as are its principles and methods—its leaders have in their hearts the germs of something better. They are building fortresses for the leaders of the next century.

But, above all, the effort to create these new counterpoising, modifying elements of a greater civilization must begin in the individual man, and especially in the youth who feels within himself the power to think, the power to write, the power to carve the marble, to paint, to leave something behind him better than dollars. In the individual minds and hearts and souls of the messengers who are now preparing for the next century is the source of regeneration. They must form an ideal of religion higher than a life devoted to grasping and grinding and griping with a whine for mercy at the end of it. They must form an ideal of science higher than increasing the production of iron or cotton goods. They must form an ideal of art higher than pandering to the prejudice or whimsey of to-day, and of literature better than anything known to the cynical prigs. And they must form an ideal of man himself worthy of that century into which are to be poured the accumulations of this. So shall material elements be brought to their proper place, made stronger for good, made harmless for evil; so shall we have that development of new and greater elements, that balance of principles, which shall make this republic greater than anything of which we can now dream.

And now, in conclusion, my dear classmates, there must have often come into your thoughts during this hour memories of two of our number, very dear to us, whom we have lost since our last meeting. Each had won respect and honor in a large sphere, each had become a strong man for good in a great community.

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